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"Over the Top"

By An American Soldier Who Went

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY achine Gunner Serving in France

right, lift, by Arthur Guy Bu

CHAPTER XIX.

On His Own. Of course Tommy cannot always be reducing plays under fire but while a rest billets he has numerous other ways of amusing himself. He is a great gambler, but never plays for rge stakes. Generally, in each company, you will find a regular Canfield. This man banks needy all the games of chance and is an undisputed author-ity on the rules of ganding. Whenever there is an argument among the Tommies about some uncertain point us to whether Houghton is entitled to Watkins' sixpence, the matter is taken d authority and his ision is final.

The two most popular games are Crown and Anchor" and "House,"

The paraphernalia used in "Crown and Anchor" consists of a piece of canvas two feet by three feet. This is livided into six equal squares. In these ares are painted a club, diamond, rt, spade, crown, and an anchor, device to a square. There are dice used, each dice marked the as the canvas. The banker sets bling outfit in the corner of illet and starts bally-hooing until a crowd of Tommies gathers around;

then the game starts.

The Tommies place bets on the quares, the crown or anchor being layed the most. The banker then olls his three dice and collects or pays ut as the case may be. If you play e crown and one shows up on the dice, you get even money, if two show up, you receive two to one, and if three. ee to one. If the crown does not ap or and you have bet on it, you lose and so on. The percentage for the Conker is large if every square is played, but if the crowd is partial to, say two squares, he has to trust to luck. The banker generally wins.

The game of "House" is very popular o. It takes two men to run it. consists of numerous squares of ard containing three rows of rs, five numbers to a row. The rs run from one to ninety. Each

The French "estaminets" in the villages are open from eleven in the morn-tag until one in the afternoon in acce with army orders.

After dinner the Tommles congrite at these places to drink French cer at a penny a glass and play

As soon as the estaminet is suffi ently crowded the proprietors of the foure" game get busy and, as they rm it, "form a school." This consists d and selling cards at ech. If they have ten in the bool, the backers of the game de-ict two frances for their trouble and a winner gots eight france.

the game starts. Each buyer his card before him on the ta-t breaking up matches into fif-

ber printed thereon, from one to ty. He raps on the table and cries out: "Eyes down, my lucky lads."

All noise ceases and every one is at

The croupler places his hand in the bag and draws forth a numbered square and immediately calls out the nber. The man who owns the card with that particular number on it covers the square with a match. The one who covers the fifteen numbers on his card first shouts "House," other backer immediately comes over to him and verifies the card by calling out the numbers thereon to the man with the bag. As each number is called he picks it out of the ones picked from the bag and says, "Right." If the count is right he shouts, "House correct, pay the lucky gentleman, and sell him a card for the next school." The "lucky gentleman" generally buys unless he has a miser trace in

Then another collection is made, a school formed, and they carry on with

The caller-out has many nicknam for the numbers such as "Kelly's Eye" for one, "Leg's Eleven" for eleven, "Clickety-click" for staty-six, or "Top of the house" meaning sinery.

The game is honest and quite en joyable. Sometimes you-have fourteen numbers on your card covered and you are waiting for the fifteenth to be called. In an imploring voice you call out, "Come on, Watkins, chum, Pm sweating on Kelly's Eye."

Watkins generally replies, "Well, keep out of a draft, you'll catch cold."

Another game is "Pontoon," played with cards; it is the same as our Black Jack," or "Twenty-one."

A card game called "Brag" is also opular. Using a custoo deck, the nopular. Using a cards three cards. It is similar to our police, except for the fact that you only use three cards d cannot draw. The deck is never ed until a man shows three of kind or a "prile" as it is called. The value of the hands are, high card, a pair, a run, a flush or three of a kind or "prile." The limit is renerally ny, so it is hard to win a fortune

The next in popularity is a card game called "Nap." It is well named. Every tipe I played it I went to sleep. Whist and solo whist are played by the highbrows of the company.

When the gamblers tire of all other es they try "Banker and Broker."

controversy in the English paper Winston Churchill made the ment, as far as I can remember, that the officers' servants in the British forces totaled nearly two hundred thousand. He claimed that this removed two hundred thousand exceptionally good and well-trained fighters from the netual firing line, claiming that the officers, when selecting a man for servant's duty, generally picked the man who had been out the longest and knew the ropes.

But from my observation I find that a large percentage of the servants do go over the top, but behind the lines May very seldom engage in digging parties, fatigues, parades or drilla. This work is as necessary as actually engaging in an attack, therefore I think If would be safe to say that the allsand is about equal to fifty thousand men who are on straight military duties. In numerous instances, officers' servants hold the rank of lance-corporals and they assume the same, duties and authority of a butler, the one stripe giving him precedence over the other servints. There are lets of amusing stories

told, of "O. S."

One day one of our majors went into the servants' billet and commenced "hinding" at them, saying that his horse had no straw and that he personally knew that straw had been sued for this purpose. He called the imce-enrporal to account. The corporni answered, "Blime me, sir, the straw 'was issued, but there wasn't enough left over from the servants' heds; in fact, we had to use some of the 'ay to 'elp out, sir."

It is needless to say that the serv-ants dispensed with their soft beds that particular night.

Nevertheless it is not the fault of the individual officer, it is just the survival of a quaint old English custom. You know an Englishman cannot be changed in a day.

But the average English officer is a good sport. He will sit on a fire step and listen respectfully to Private Jones' theory of the way the war should be conducted. This war is gradually crumbling the one insurmorntable wall of caste.

You would be convinced of this if you could see King George go among his men on an inspecting tour under fire, or pause before a little wooden



Meeting a Gas and Infantry Attack.

I spent a week trying to teach some of the Tommies how to play poker, but because I won thirty-five francs they declared that they didn't "fawncy" the

Tommy plays few card games; the general run never heard of poker, euchre, seven up, or pinochle. They have a game similar to pinochle called "Royal Bezique," but few know how to play it.

Generally there are two decks of cards in a section, and in a short time they are so dog-cared and greasy, you can hardly tell the ace of spades from the ace of hearts. The owners of these decks sometimes condescend to lend them after much coaxing

So you see, Mr. Atkins has his fun mixed in with his hardships and, con-trary to popular belief, the rank and file of the British army in the trenches is one big happy family. Now in Virginia, at school, I was fed on old Mc-Guffy's primary reader, which gave me an opinion of an Englishman about equal to a '76 Minute Man's backed up by a Sinn Feiner's. But I found Tom-my to be the best of mates and a gentleman through and through. He never thinks of knocking his officers. If one makes a costly mistake and Tommy pays with his blood, there is no general condemnation of the officer. He is just pitied. It is exactly the same as it was with the Light Brigade at Balaciava, to say nothing of Gailipoli, Neuve Chapelle and Loos. Personally I remember a little incident where twenty of us were sent on a trench raid, only two of us returning, but I will tell this story later on.

I said it was a big happy family, and so it is, but as in all happy families, there are servants, so in the British army there are also servants, officers' servants, or "O. S." as they are termed. ne of the backers of the game has In the American army the common mail cloth hag in which are ainety name for them is "dog robbers." From

cross in some shell-tossed field with tears in his eyes as he reads the in-scription. And a little later perhaps bend over a wounded man on a stretch er, patting him on the head.

More than once in a hospital I have seen a titled Red Cross nurse fetching and carrying for a wounded soldier, perhaps the perhaps the one who in civil life de livered the coal at her back do day she does not shrink from lighting his fag or even washing his grimy body.

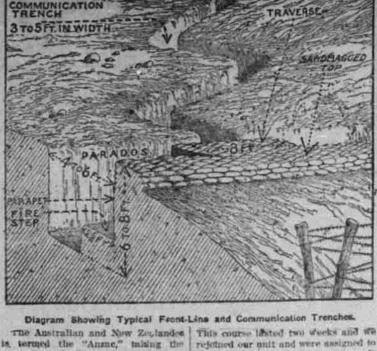
Tommy admires Albert of Belgium cause he is not a pusher of men; he leads them. With him it's not a case of "take that trench," It is "come on and we will take it."

It is amusing to notice the different characteristics of the Irish, Scotch and English soldiers. The Irish and Scotch are very impetuous especially when it comes to bayonet fighting, while the Englishman, though a trifle slower, thoroughly does his bit; he is more methodical and has the grip of a bulldog on a captured position. He is slower to think; that is the reason why he never knows when he is licked.

Twenty minutes before going over the top the English Tommy will sit on the fire step and thoroughly examine the mechanism of his rifle to see that it is in working order and will fire prop-erly. After this examination he is sat-

isfied and ready to meet the Boches. But the Irishman or Scotchman sits on the fire step, his rifle with bayonet fixed between his knees, the butt of which perhaps is sinking into the mud—the holt couldn't be opened with a team of horses it is so rusty—but he spits on his alceve and slowly polishes his hayonet; when this is done he also is ready to argue with Fritz.

It is not necessary to mention to colonials (the Cauadians, Australia and New Zealanders), the whole wor move what they have done for Ex-



name from the first letters of their of field designation, Australian and New Zealand army corps.

Tommy divides the German army into three classes according to their fighting abilities. They rank as fol lows: Prassians, Bavarians and Sax-

When up against a Prussian regi ent it is a case of keep your napper below the parapet and duck. A bangbang all the time and a war is on. The Bavarians are little better, but the xous are fairly good sports and are willing occasionally to behave as geonen and take it easy, but you cannot trust any of them overlong.

At one point of the line the trenches ere about thirty-two yards apart. This sounds horrible, but in fact it easy, because neither side could shell the enemy's front-line trench for fear shells would drop into their own. This eliminated artillery fire.

In these trenches when up against e Prussians and Bavarians, Tommy had a hot time of it, but when the Sax ons "took over" It was a picnic; they would yell across that they were Saxons and would not fire. Both sides would sit on the parapet and earry on a conversation. This generally consist-ed of Tommy telling them how much he loved the kaiser, while the Saxons informed Tommy that King George a particular friend of theirs and hoped that he was doing nicely.

When the Saxons were to be relieved by Prussians or Bavarians, they would yell this information across No Man's Land and Tommy would immediately tumble into his trench and keep his head down.

If an English regiment was to be relleved by the wild Irish, Tommy would tell the Saxons, and immediately a volley of "Donner und Blitzens" could be heard and it was Fritz's turn to get a crick in his back from stooping, and the people in Berlin would close their

Usually when an Irishman takes over a trench, just before "stand down" in the morning, he sticks his rifle over the top, aimed in the direction of Berand engages in what is known as "mad minute." This consists of firing fifteen shots in a minute. He is not alming at anything in particular -just sends over each shot with a will get some poor unsuspecting Fritz in the napper hundreds of yards be-hind the lines. It generally does; that's the reason the Boches hate the man

from Erin's tale. The Saxons, though better than the Prussians and Bavarians, have a nasty trait of treachery in their makeup.

At one point of the line where the trenches "ere very close, a stake was driven into the ground midway be-tween the hostile lines. At night when it was his turn, Tommy would crawl to this take and attach some London papers to it, while at the foot he would place tins of bully beef, fags, sweets and other delicacies that he had re-caived from Blighty in the ever lookedfor parcel. Later on Fritz would come out and get these luxuries.

The next night Tommy would go out to see what Fritz put into his stocking. The donation generally consisted of a paper from Berlin, telling who was winning the war, some tinned sausages, cigars, and occasionally a little beer, but a funny thing, Tommy never re-turned with the beer unless it was inside of him. His platoon got a whist of his breath one night and the offending Tommy lost his job.

One night a young English sergeant crawled to the stake and as he tried to letach the German paper a bomb ex-ploded and mangied him borribly. Fritz ad set a trap and gained another vicfim which was only one more black mark against him in the book of this war. From that time on diplomatic reations were severed.

Returning to Tommy, I think his spirit is best shown in the questions he asks. It is never "who is going to win" out always "how long will it take?"

CHAPTER XX.

"Chats With Fritz."

We were swimming in money, from the receipts of our theatrical venture, and had forgotten all about the war, when an order came through that our origade would again take over their ector of the line.

The day that these orders were ismed, our captain assembled the company and asked for volunteers to go to
the Machine Gun school at St. Omar.
I volunteered and was accepted.
Sixteen men from our brigade left
for the course in machine guanery.

the brigade machine gun company. It almost broke my heart to leave my company mates.

The gun we used was the Victors, Light 303, water cooled.

I was still a member of the Suichte club, having jumped from the frying pan into the fire. I was assigned to section 1, gun No. 2, and the first time. "in" took position in the front-line trench.

During the day our gun would be dismounted on the fire step ready for instant use. We shared a dugout with the Lewis gunners. At "stand to" we would mount our gun on the parapet and go on watch beside it until "stand down" in the morning. Then the gun would be dismounted and again placed in readiness on the fire step.

We did eight days in the front-lintrench without soything unusual hap-pening outside of the ordinary trench routine. On the night that we were to "carry out." a bombing raid against the German lines was pulled off. This raid-ing party consisted of sixty company men, sixteen bombers, and four Lewis machine guas with their crows.

The raid took the Borhes by surprisand was a complete success, the party bringing back twenty-one prisoners.

The Germans must have been awfully sore, because they turned loose a barrage of shrapnel, with a few "Minntes" and "whim bangs" intermixed. The shells were dropping into our front line like hallstones.

To get even, we could have left the prisoners in the fire trench, in charge of the men on guard and let them click Fritz's strafeling but Tommy does not treat prisoners that way.

Five of them were brought into my dugout and turned over to me so that they would be safe from the German fire.

In the candlelight, they looked very much shaken, nerves gone and chalky faces, with the exception of one, a great big fellow. He looked very much at ease. I liked him from the start.

I got out the rum lar and gave each a nip and passed around some fags. the old reliable Woodbines. The other prisoners looked their gratitude, but the big fellow said in English, "Thank you, sir, the rum is excellent and I appreciate it, also your kindness."

He told me his name was Carl captain, Schmidt, of the Sixty-sixth Bavarian Then Light infantry; that he had lived six years in New York (knew the city better than I did), had been to Coper island and many of our ball games. He was a regular fan. I couldn't make him believe that Hans Wagner wasn't the best ball player in the world.

From New York he had gone to London, where he worked as a walter in the Hotel Russell. Just before the war he went home to Germany to see his nts, the war came and he was con-

He told me he was very sorry to ear that London was in ruins from the Zeppelin raids. I could not con-vince him otherwise, for hadn't he seen moving pictures in one of the German cities of St. Paul's cathedral in ruins. I changed the subject because he

was so stubborn in his belief. It was my intention to try and pump him for information as to the methods of the German snipers, who had been caus-ing us trouble in the last few days. I broached the subject and he shu

up like a clam. After a few minutes he very innocently said: "German suipers get paid rewards for killing the English."

I eagerly asked, "What are they?" He answered: "For killing or wounding an English private, the sniper gets one mark. For killing or wounding an English officer

e gets five marks, but if he kills a Red Cap or English general, the suiper gets twenty-one days tied to the wheel of a limber as punishment for his careless-Then he paused, waiting for me to

bite, I suppose.

I bit all right and saked him why the eniper was punished for killing an English general. With a smile he re-

plied:
"Well, you see, if all the English generals were killed, there would be no one left to make costly mistakes."

I shut him up, he was getting too resh for a prisoner. After a while he inked at me and I winked back, then

winked at me and I winked back, then
the escort came to take the prisoners
to the rear. I shook hands and wished
him "The best of luck and a safe journey to Blighty."

I liked that prisoner, he was a fine
fellow, had an Iron Cross, too. I advised him to keep it out of sight, or
some Tommy would be sending it hame. to his girl in Blighty as a souvenir.

One dark and rainy night while on guard we were looking over the top from the fire step of our front-line treach, when we heard a noise imme-diately in front of our barbed wire. The sentry next to me challenged, "Halt, who comes there?" and brought his rise to the aim. His challenge answered in German. A captain in the next traverse chimbed upon the and-bagged parapet to investigate—a brave but fosthardy deed—"Crack" went a bullet and be tumbled back into the trench with a bole through his stomach and died a few minutes later. A lance corporal in the next platoon was so enraged at the captain's death that he of the noise with the shouted warning to us: "Duck your nappers, my lucky inds." A sharp dynamite report, a flare in front of us, and liven stience.

We immediately sent up two star-shells, and by their light could see two inri forms lying on the ground close to our wire. A sergeant and four stretcher-bearers went out in front and soon returned, carrying two limp hodies. Down in the dugout, in the flickering light of three candles, we saw that they were two German off. eers, one a captain and the other an "unteroffizier," a rank one grade higher thal a sergeant general, but below the grade of lieutenant.

The captain's face had been almost completely forn away by the bomb's explosion. The unteredister was alive. breathing with difficulty. In a few min ntes he opened his eyes and blinked in the glare of the candles.

The pair had evidently been drinking heavily, for the alcohol fumes were sickening and completely pervaded the dugout I turned away in disgu hating to see a man cross the Great Divide full of booze.

One of our officers could speak German and he questioned the dying man. In a faint voice, interrupted by fre-quent biccoughs, the unterofficier told his story.

There had been a drinking b among the officers in one of the Ger-man dugouts, the main beverage being champagne. With a drunken leer be informed us that champagne was plen-tiful on their side and that it did not cost them anything either. About seven that night the conversation had turned to the "contemptible" English, and the captain had made a wager that he would hang his cap on the English barbed wire to show his contempt for the English sentries. The wager was and he had crept out into No Man's Land to carry out this wager.

They had gotten about halfway across when the drink took effect and the captain fell asleep. After about two hours of vain attempts the anter-offinier had at last succeeded in waking the captain, reminded him of his bet, and warned him that he would be the laughing stock of the officers' mess if he did not accomplish his object, but the captain was trembling all over and insisted on returning to the German insisted on returning to the Ger lines. In the darkness they lost their bearings and crawled toward the English trenches. They reached the harbed wire and were suddenly challenged by our sentry. Being too drunk to realize that the challenge was in English, the captain refused to crawl back. Finally unteroffizier convinced his su that they were in front of the wire. Realizing this too late, the cap tain drew his revolver and with a mut tered curse fired blindly toward ou trench. His bullet no doubt ki

Then the bomb came over s he was, dying—and a good job too, we thought. The captain dead? Well, bis

men wouldn't weep at the news. Without giving us any further infor-

We searched the bodies for identifi-cation disks but they had left every-thing behind before starting on their foolbardy errand.

Next afternoon we buried them in our little cemetery apart from the graves of the Tommies. If you over go into that cemetery you will see two little wooden crosses in the corner of the cemetery set away from the rest. They read:

Ceptain German Army Died — 1918 Uaknown B. L.P.

German Arm Died — 1916 Unk R.LP. (To be Conting

